

ENRICO BRUNETTI.

By the death of Enrico Brunetti on the 21st of January 1927, the Zoological Survey of India has lost a very valuable collaborator, who had been connected with it from its foundation in 1916, and with its predecessor the Zoological and Anthropological Section of the Indian Museum since 1904. For the greater part of this period his connection with these institutions was purely informal, and he used to work on the Indian Museum collections on a piece-work basis without holding any definite appointment, but on two occasions he served temporarily as an Assistant Superintendent in the Zoological Survey of India, and was in charge of the Insect collections. He was undoubtedly one of the outstanding figures amongst those entomologists of the present century, who have devoted the greater part of their lives to the study of the Indian Fauna.

Unfortunately we have no information about the date or the year of Brunetti's birth. From the information supplied by his sister, Mrs. M. A. Cotton, it is certain that he was born in London, and this is also confirmed by a paragraph in one of the official letters sent by the late Dr. N. Annandale to the Government of India regarding Brunetti's temporary appointment in the Zoological Survey of India. The Government of India for some unknown reason believed that Brunetti, though of Italian nationality, was born in New York. Dr. Annandale, apparently on information supplied by Brunetti, replied, "I understand that Mr. Brunetti was born in London and was the son of an Italian naturalized as a British Subject. He was never in America either to be born or for any other purpose." His sister has informed me that their father was an Italian, a native of Fossombrome, a little suburb of Rome. He migrated to England and was employed as a Chef in one of the big London restaurants. Their mother came from Bath, Somersetshire. Brunetti from a very early age showed a marked musical talent and appears to have had very little in common with his father, or the rest of the family. According to his sister he showed unusual talent for musical composition from an early age, and was fortunate enough to have had musical instruction among others from Mons. Giacomo Ferraris and Sig. Enrico Mattei. His earliest musical engagement was apparently in 1901, when he used to play the piano at the Empire, Islington. In 1902 he conducted bands at Plymouth and Llandrindod Wells, and in 1903 was appointed bandmaster at Harwich. He came out to India in 1904 as musical conductor at the Tivoli Theatre, Calcutta. For several years he was connected with the Bandman Opera Co., Ltd., and toured with the various travelling companies brought out by this company to various parts of India and the Far East. Unfortunately few details are available regarding his various musical engagements, but from the collections which he brought back with him, there can be no doubt that he visited the Strait Settlements, Java, and the Treaty Ports of China. From 1906 onwards, however, he was mostly in Calcutta, and only paid flying visits to some hill stations. He used from time to time to conduct the band or play the piano in the Globe Opera House, the Great Eastern Hotel, the Grand Hotel or some other place of entertainment.

Brunetti was strongly opposed to any musical or dramatic performances on Sundays and often got into trouble by refusing to conduct after " God Save the King " had been played. His strict adherence to these principles was undoubtedly responsible for his musical career being financially unsuccessful though there can be no doubt that he was a very clever and a gifted musician. According to his sister, he has left a fairly comprehensive library of several hundred compositions of musical, operatic and other works.

Besides music and insects, he was interested in the collection of postage stamps and had built up a fairly representative, if not very valuable, collection of stamps, both by exchange and by purchase so far as his meagre purse permitted.

By nature Brunetti was quiet and somewhat reserved. To his friends and acquaintances he appeared as one dissatisfied with his surroundings, and was always complaining of a number of worries that to others might appear trivial, but were to him none the less real. In addition to the climate of Calcutta, which caused him to suffer severely from prickly heat, Brunetti used to complain of the barking of dogs, the cawing of the crows, the almost constant noise of the Calcutta Tram cars which run past the Indian Museum, and within recent years the incessant hooting of motor car horns. Brunetti's hatred of the crows of Calcutta amounted almost to an obsession and every morning and evening he used to go about shooting crows with a small collector's gun. This feeling of hatred seems to have been fully reciprocated by the crows of Calcutta for invariably one or more crows were found to be sitting on the venetian blind of one of the windows outside his laboratory on the top floor of the Indian Museum and incessantly worrying poor Brunetti while he was working. I have also seen him walking without his gun in the Museum compound and in other parts of Calcutta with a regular flock of crows flying overhead, and following him with their shrill cries. Most of us can quite well remember the day after a severe cyclonic storm in Calcutta when Brunetti greeted everyone with a very happy expression on his face. He pointed to the large numbers of crows lying dead on the Maidan and thought that their death was probably a just retribution for all the worries which these birds caused him.

Brunetti was essentially a Dipterist and his interest in other insects, at least during the later years of his life, did not extend beyond that of a collector. With the meagre information which we unfortunately possess about his early life, it is impossible to say for certain what made him select the Diptera as the special group for his studies, but, as Mr. Senior-White has suggested further on, it may probably have been due to his early acquaintance with Verrall. For various reasons, however, I believe that it was the influence of the late Dr. Nelson Annandale which was responsible for Brunetti taking seriously to the study of Diptera, and that it was this interest which transformed Brunetti from an amateur collector of insects to an expert Dipterist. Brunetti, from the very year of his arrival in India, used to spend his spare time in making collections of insects which he later brought over to the Museum for identification, mostly by comparison with the named collections in the Indian Museum. Very early, however, he found that the collections of Diptera in the Indian Museum, even though they had been partly named by such

authorities as Bigot, Becker and others, were not sufficiently extensive for the identification of all or even most of the forms which he himself had collected and others which he found in the unnamed collections of the Indian Museum. In spite of the fact that he had neither any academic qualifications, nor had had any definite training as an entomologist, the late Dr. Annandale at a very early stage recognized the outstanding merits of Brunetti as a Systematist, and gave him every facility for starting work on the Indian Diptera. He had, as far as I can find, not published any work on any group of insects previously, and under the circumstances I have very little doubt that in the selection of this group, the influence of Dr. Annandale must have been supreme. Further, Dr. Annandale helped Brunetti financially by arranging for the purchase by the Trustees of the Museum from him of his collections of insects in groups other than the Diptera and as time went on employed him to work on the Museum collections on a piece-work basis.

In the first few years after his arrival in Calcutta Brunetti was doing gratuitous work in the Indian Museum, but from 1907 onwards he received special honoraria varying from £30 to £300 a year for the work he did on the collections of the Indian Museum. As noted already he also worked temporarily as an Assistant Superintendent in charge of the Insect Section in 1919-1920, and in 1921, for a period of three months in each case.

In 1921 at the suggestion of Dr. Annandale a second class passage was sanctioned by the Government of India for Brunetti to go to London and revise his work on the Indian Diptera by examination of the original type-specimens in the British Museum (Natural History), London. It was expected that a period of one year would be sufficient for him to finish this work and the Government of India with the approval of the Secretary of State for India sanctioned a special grant of £300 as Brunetti's remuneration for this period. Brunetti sailed from Calcutta in May 1921 and took with him most of the named collections of the Zoological Survey of India (Indian Museum) which he wished to revise. Though he was actually paid for only a year by the Government of India, Brunetti found that it was impossible to finish all the work during this period, and was carrying on the revision work till very shortly before his death. In 1923 the Bureau of Entomological Research, London, employed Brunetti for working on African and other flies and since that date it was only during his spare time that he could carry on his studies on the Indian Diptera. Since his return to England he often went to Paris to spend the winter there and also worked on the collection of Diptera in the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris.

He was taken seriously ill while in Paris in the winter of 1926-27 and returned to London when a little better, but he never recovered and died in a hospital in London on the 21st January 1927.

He bequeathed his valuable collection of Diptera and other insects and his entomological library to the British Museum (Natural History), London.

The following two sentences of the late Dr. Annandale admirably describe Brunetti's interest in Diptera, his work and the conditions of

his life in Calcutta, and I cannot do better than quote them in *extenso* :
 “ His profession is that of a musician and it is hardly too much to say that for the greater part of ten years he has devoted his evenings to earning his daily bread and his days to the study of Diptera. ”

“ The school to which Mr. Brunetti belongs, and to which it is natural and proper that an amateur should belong, is that of the rigid taxonomists, who are interested in the naming and classification of specimens rather than in morphological relationships or biology. ”

Brunetti was unfortunately never well off financially and did not belong to any scientific Society or Association except to the Asiatic Society of Bengal of which he was elected an Associate member in March 1915.

A list of Brunetti's scientific publications prepared by Mr. C. O. Bateman, Librarian, Zoological Survey of India, is appended (pp. 294-296). From this it will be seen that he published 33 papers in the “ *Records of the Indian Museum* ” and 3 volumes in the “ *Fauna of British India* ” on Indian Diptera.

The following pages which deal with Brunetti's work as a Dipterologist have been kindly written by Mr. Ronald Senior-White, who was personally acquainted with Brunetti and is in a better position than myself to write regarding Brunetti's work on the Indian Diptera.

B. P.

BRUNETTI AS A DIPTEROLOGIST.

The history of Oriental dipterology divides itself into two parts, separated by a well marked pause at the close of the Nineteenth Century. The death of Bigot in 1893 had put a term to the endless flow of description, insufficient and loosely worded, which Francis Walker and himself had been producing for forty years, whilst the chaos resulting therefrom had, in 1896, been ably summarized by van der Wulp in his classical ‘ *Catalogue of the described Diptera from South Asia.* ’

Without Wulp's catalogue, or an analogous work, further progress would have been impossible, but even with it anyone proposing to take up the study of Oriental Diptera might well have paused appalled before the lists of species therein recorded. Walker was notoriously incapable of correctly locating a species generically, in fact this point does not seem to have greatly interested him, he seemingly having been solely concerned to publish a new specific name. As the types of both Bigot and himself, together with those of the fewer though much more adequately characterized species put out in the last half of the century by Schiner, Doleschall and Thomson, were all in Europe, any progress from the Asiatic end might well have been considered impossible.

But this was not all. Among the families of the order one had so far not suffered from over description, but now, following on Ross' discovery, this, the Culicidae, became the subject of equally indiscriminating publication, and from 1900 onwards floods of new species, and, worse, of genera, poured forth from the Medical Press, from workers largely ignorant of the principles of taxonomy and the elementary rules of zoological nomenclature, until it might well have appeared to a detached zoologist that